

DRAFT
Board of Veterans Services
Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2006

A meeting of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) was held on Monday, September 18, 2006, at the American Legion Department of Virginia in Richmond.

Members Present

John Anderson; Mason Botts; Vince Burgess; Paris Davis; Lydia Dudley; Paul Galanti; Pat Green; Thad Jones; Bill Leighty; Al Sample; Judson Stanley; Max Taylor; and Vivian Watts.

Members Absent

Mark Cole; Kirk Cox; John Edwards; Jay O'Brien; Samuel Metters; and Bettye Simmons.

Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present

Anne Atkins, Communications Director, Virginia Department of Veterans Services; C. L. "Bert" Boyd, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Veterans Services; Steve Combs, Director of Policy and Planning, Department of Veterans Services; Lew Deal, Outreach Director, Virginia Department of Veterans Services; Rhonda Earman, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services; Andrew Edwards, Webmaster, Virginia Department of Veterans Services; Fred Fralin, Benefits Services Manager, Department of Veterans Services; Don Ferguson, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General; Jon Hatfield, Executive Director, Virginia War Memorial; Dick Hickman, Senate Finance Committee staff; Dan Kemano, Cemeteries Director, Department of Veterans Services; Annie Mosby, Director, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training, Department of Veterans Services; Becky Roop, Information Technology Manager, Department of Veterans Services; Bill Van Thiel, Administrator, Virginia Veterans Care Center, Department of Veterans Services; and Ron White, Department of General Services.

Others Present

Tom Anderson, Genie Brickley, Tom Briggs, Joe Carr, Roger Overstreet and Roger Sullivan of the Virginia Veterans Coalition; and Doris Thomas.

Materials Distributed

Meeting agenda; draft minutes of the July 10, 2006, meeting; Office of the Attorney General's August 22, 2006 letter to Commissioner Burgess, defining the term "veteran;" Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations' (JLC) 2007 Legislative Agenda and the JLC's proposal for combined legislative priorities for the JLC, Board of Veterans Services, Virginia Military Advisory Council, Citizen-Soldier Support Council, Department of Military Affairs, and Department of Veterans Services; news release and flyer for the September 16 Veterans Expo in Wytheville; Op/Ed piece authored by Commissioner Burgess about veterans programs and services published in the September 2, 2006 edition of the Daily Press; Department of Veterans Services September 18, 2006 graphics presentation to the House Appropriations Committee; DVS Communications Update; summaries of Congressional bills S.2762, H.R.5671, S.2766, H.R. 5122, S.2694; DVS FY 2007 Summary of Operations as of August 31, 2006; and Virginia

War Memorial poster publicizing the upcoming “Virginians at War” events.

Call to Order

With of 12 of 19 members present, Chairman Galanti called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. Delegate Watts arrived shortly after the meeting began. The membership and guests recited the pledge of allegiance to the American flag.

Chairman Galanti welcomed everyone and asked Board members to introduce themselves and provide a brief summary of their backgrounds.

Jon Hatfield announced a Virginia War Memorial program entitled “Virginians at War,” to be broadcast on public broadcasting television stations in Richmond and Charlottesville during the months of September and October.

Chairman Galanti then presented outgoing Chairman Dr. John Anderson with a special license plate on behalf of the Board and DVS, honoring him for his service to Virginia veterans.

Approval of Minutes

A **motion** was made by Bill Leighty, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2006 meeting, as drafted.

Commissioner’s Report

Commissioner Burgess reported that he had made a presentation earlier in the day to the House Appropriations Committee. The purpose of the presentation was to brief Committee members on how DVS has expended General Assembly appropriations and anticipated future growth of the agency.

Commissioner Burgess thanked Chairman Galanti for his presentation at the recent Virginia War Memorial ceremony honoring POWs and MIAs.

Commissioner Burgess briefed the Board on the following topics:

- Congressional legislation that could impact veterans;
- Status of the Southwest Virginia Cemetery project;
- Implementation of the Financial Management System;
- Activities associated with implementation of Executive Order 19 (EO 19);
- Joint legislative proposal for the Board of Veterans Services, Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC), Department of Veterans Services, Department of Military Affairs, Virginia Military Advisory Council and the Citizen-Soldier Support Council;
- Update on DVS marketing and outreach to the veteran community, including the September 16 Veterans Expo held in Wytheville; and
- Issues related to the Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program.

Pre-Registered Public Comment

Members of the Virginia Veterans Coalition spoke during the pre-registered public comment

period. Roger Sullivan related the story of an elderly nurse's bureaucratic difficulties in being admitted to McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. Tom Anderson commented on his recent visit to the Virginia Veterans Care Center and how favorably impressed he was with its condition.

Subcommittee Reports

Chairman Galanti recognized the new subcommittee chairpersons and discussed the roles and responsibilities of the subcommittees.

Cemeteries Subcommittee

Pat Green briefed the Board on the work of the Cemeteries Subcommittee.

Care Centers Subcommittee

Thad Jones briefed the Board on the work of the Care Centers Subcommittee.

Benefits Subcommittee

Al Sample briefed the Board on the work of the Benefits Subcommittee.

Budget and Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Steve Combs reported that due to family responsibilities, Subcommittee Chairman Sam Metters was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Combs said that Dr. Metters is in the process of completing a draft Budget and Strategic Planning report for submission to Commissioner Burgess, the final version of which will be presented at the next Board meeting. Everyone agreed with Delegate Watts' suggestion that the periodic audit reports provided by DVS to the Auditor of Public Accounts come through this Subcommittee.

2007 Legislative Priorities

Chairman Galanti then called attention to the JLC's 2007 Legislative Agenda and discussion followed. Mason Botts made a motion that the Board adopt the JLC's proposal for a combined legislative proposal for the JLC, Board of Veterans Services, Virginia Military Advisory Council, Citizen-Soldier Support Council, Department of Military Affairs, and Department of Veterans Services for submission to the Governor. Commissioner Burgess pointed out that EO 19 calls simply for a joint legislative agenda between the JLC and the Board, so Mr. Botts amended his motion for support of the 2007 Legislative Agenda as adopted by the JLC on August 9, 2006. The motion was seconded by Thad Jones and passed unanimously.

Comments from the Chairpersons

Chairperson of the Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) Lydia Dudley briefed the Board on the activities of the VSF.

JLC Chairman Mason Botts briefed the Board on the activities of the JLC.

Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for January 8, 2007, 1:00 p.m., at the American Legion Department of Virginia in Richmond, subject to the availability of the site.

Open Public Comment and Roundtable Discussion

Members of the Virginia Veterans Coalition spoke during the open public comment period. Roger Sullivan offered comments that some DVS employees are underpaid.

Adjournment

There being no further business, a **motion** was made, seconded and passed unanimously that the meeting be adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.